

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND THE FIRE CODE



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## Recommendations For Our Foreign Embassy Partners

Presented by  
The District of Columbia Fire & EMS Department  
Fire Prevention Division

# The Goals

- ▣ Heighten awareness that life safety and preservation is everyone's responsibility.
- ▣ Address human contribution to life safety in a building (Embassy) when fire or other emergencies occur.
- ▣ Highlight how the level of preparation by building occupants can improve the emergency responders abilities during an emergency.

# TheVIDEO

<http://vimeo.com/23675669>

# Making The Difference

- ▣ Technological code advances have really help today's fire service in promoting life and property preservation.
- ▣ Building features properly designed and maintained are critical and increases survivability chances greatly during and emergency.
  - ✓ Fire Protection Systems (Sprinklers)
  - ✓ Fire Detection/Notification Systems (Fire Alarm Systems)
  - ✓ Fire Resistance-Ratings
  - ✓ Properly designed Egress systems

# The Challenge

- ▣ Even with technological advancements, the human factor remains a huge challenge for the fire service. Though we pursue strong efforts to promote quality fire code awareness and recommendations, traditional human behavior seems to go unchanged in understanding the true importance of life preservation.

**WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO LEARN  
FROM OUR MISTAKES!**

# THE RELATIONSHIP

- ▣ The District of Columbia Fire Service has limited authority in governing the actions and activities that take place on Federal Enclaves or in Foreign Embassies (We have to be invited in). However, our goals and practices should remain in-line with one another at all levels.

**Ensuring a safe atmosphere for our employees,  
visitors, and residents!**

- ✓Local
- ✓Federal
- ✓Foreign Embassy

# What is an emergency ?

## According to the Fire Code

- ▣ An “emergency” is an event that jeopardizes
  - ▣ The occupants of a building
  - ▣ The building
  - ▣ The contents of the building
  
- ▣ Types of emergencies
  - ▣ Natural
  - ▣ Human based



# Emergency Notification

**What methods are  
used to alert  
occupants of an  
emergency?**





# Emergency Messages

- ▣ What do the alarms mean?
- ▣ What actions are you expected to take?
- ▣ Who issues voice instructions?

**Why should I believe the  
alarm or emergency  
information message?**



**What can be done to protect building occupants in an emergency?**

# Emergency Preparedness

Emergency preparedness focuses primarily on the actions of the occupants in a building or structure.

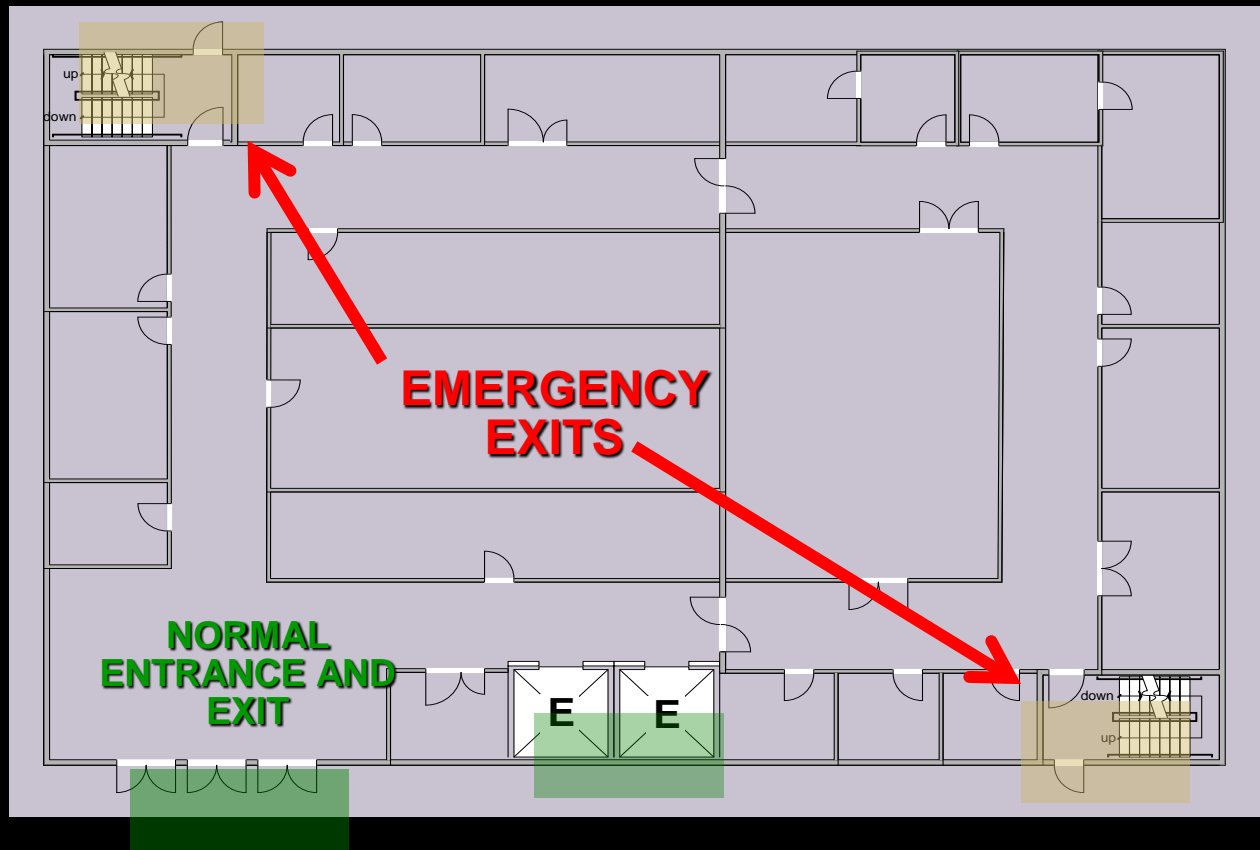
*(International Fire Code Commentary, Chapter 4, 2006 ed.)*

- ✓ High levels of care related to the concentration of people.
- ✓ Physical and mental capabilities of the occupants.
- ✓ Lack of familiarity with a building or simply because of the complexity and size of the building.

# Managing Occupants

- ▣ The management of occupants in an emergency is primarily moving them away from the hazard.
- ✓ Verify that you have enough exits and exit capacity for your embassy.
- ✓ Ensure that the exits are immediately accessible, adequately arrange, properly identified, and suitably protected as recommended by the fire/building codes.
- ✓ Occupants must not only know where the exits are , but when and how to use them **“TRAINING”** as recommended by the fire code.

# Where are your exits?



**Know the location of the emergency exits in your building**

# Managing Occupants

Various factors and situations can sometimes make building evacuation difficult or impractical.

Become familiar:

- ✓The building, its systems, and features
- ✓The Occupants

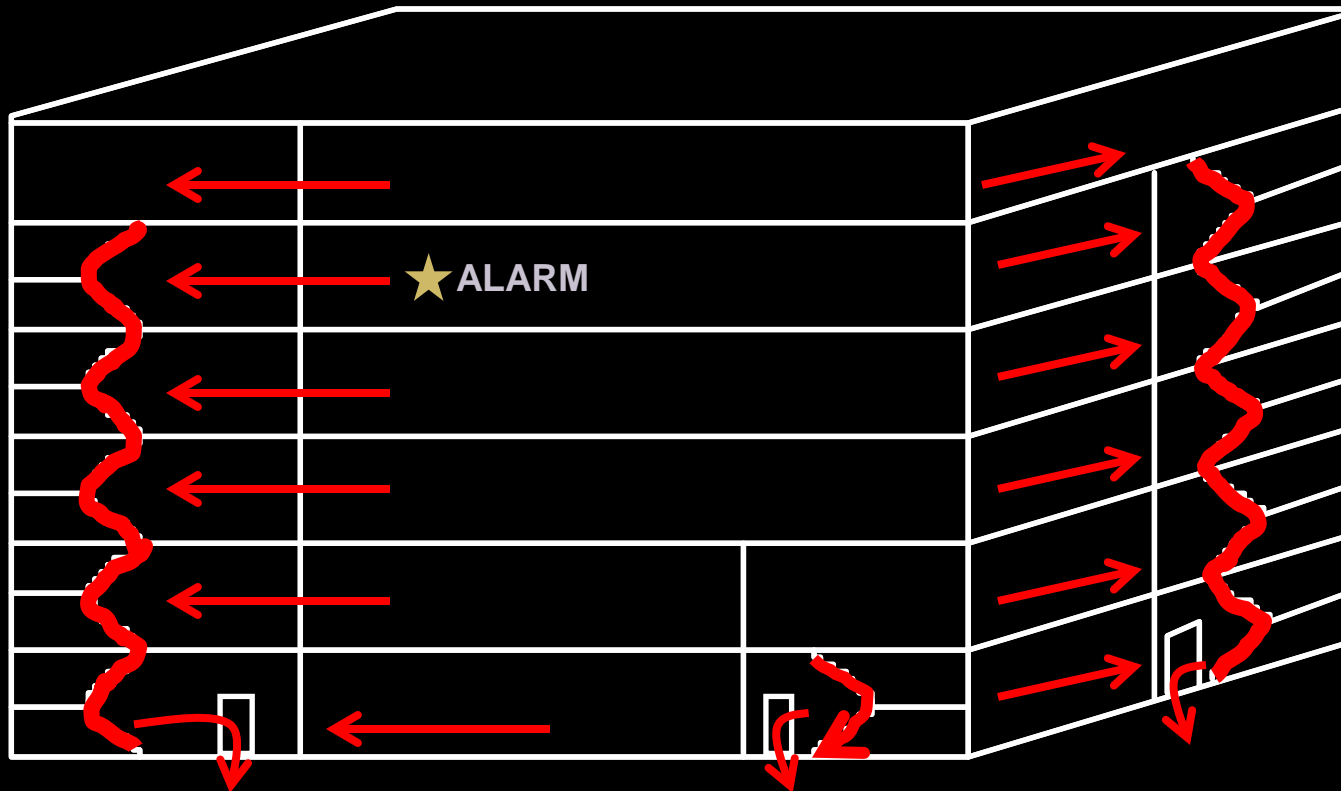
**Discuss potential problems to find solutions!**

# Occupant Management Concepts

- ▣ Evacuate
  - Total
  - Staged
  - Relocation to safe area within the building
- ▣ Defend or protect in-place

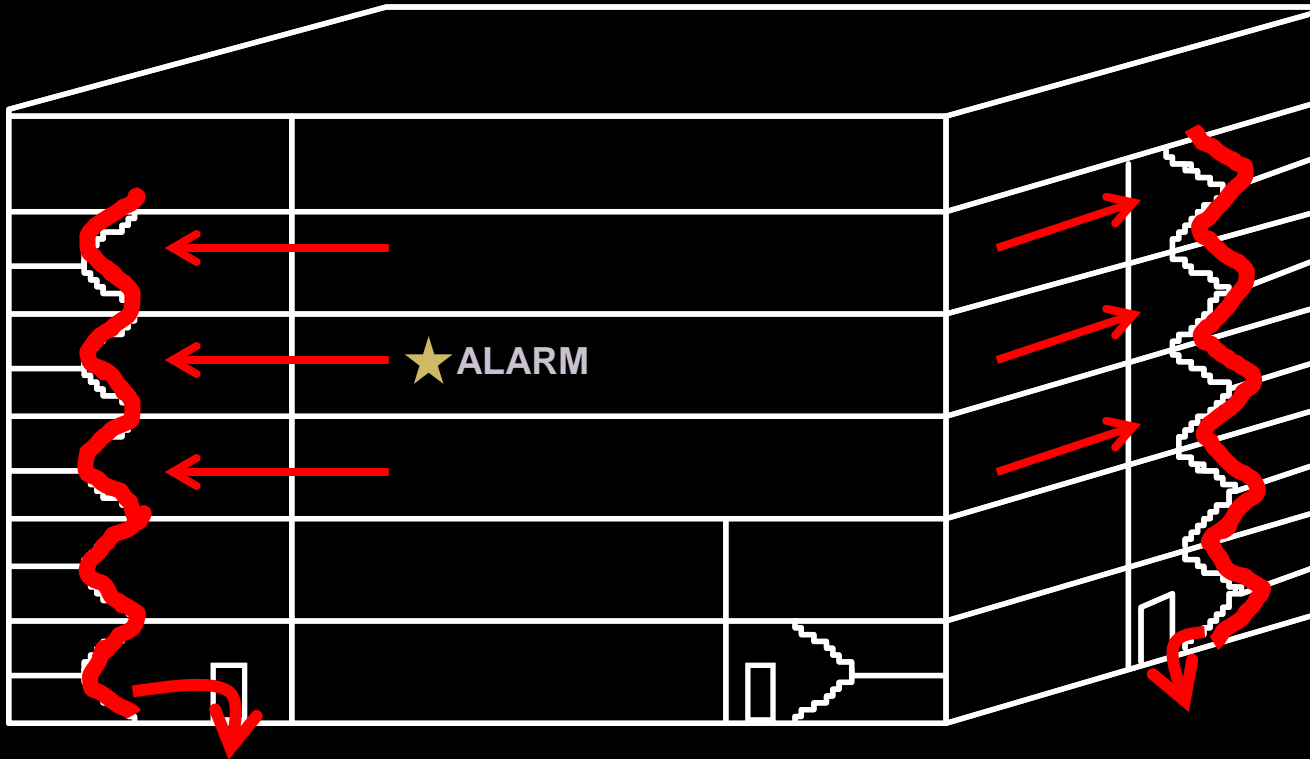


# Total Evacuation



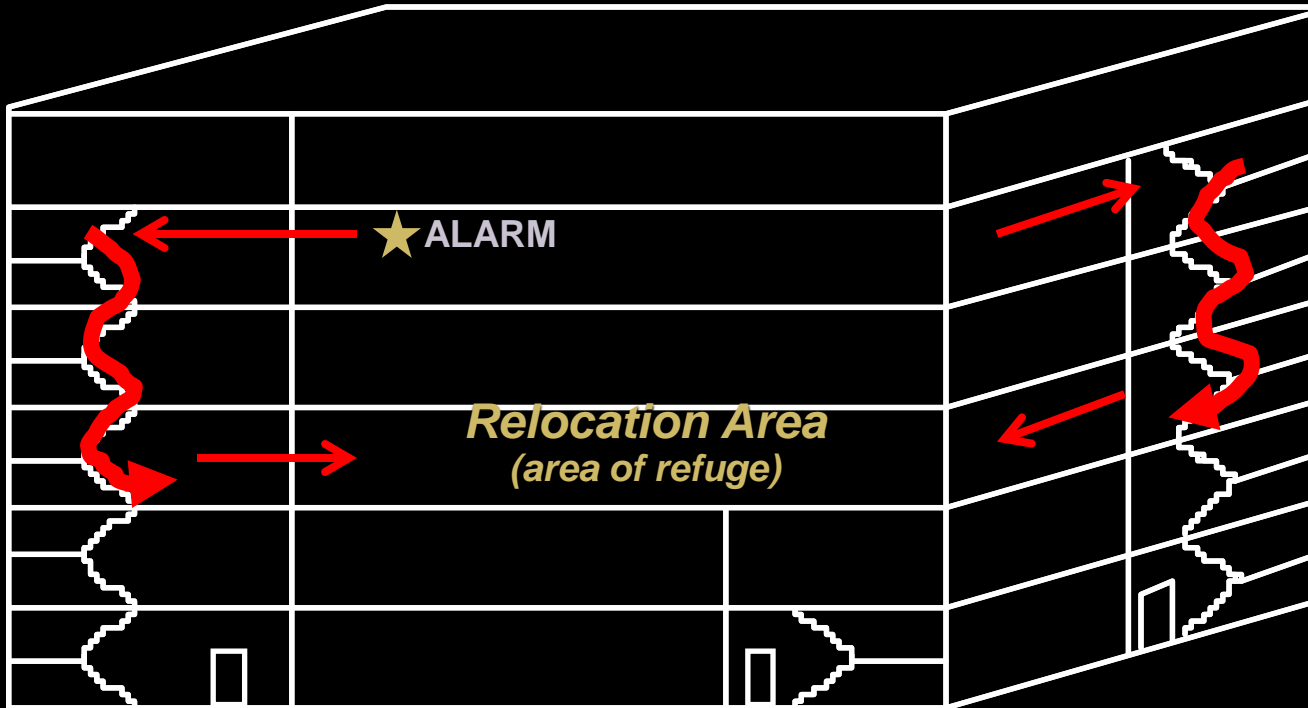


# Zone/Staged Evacuation



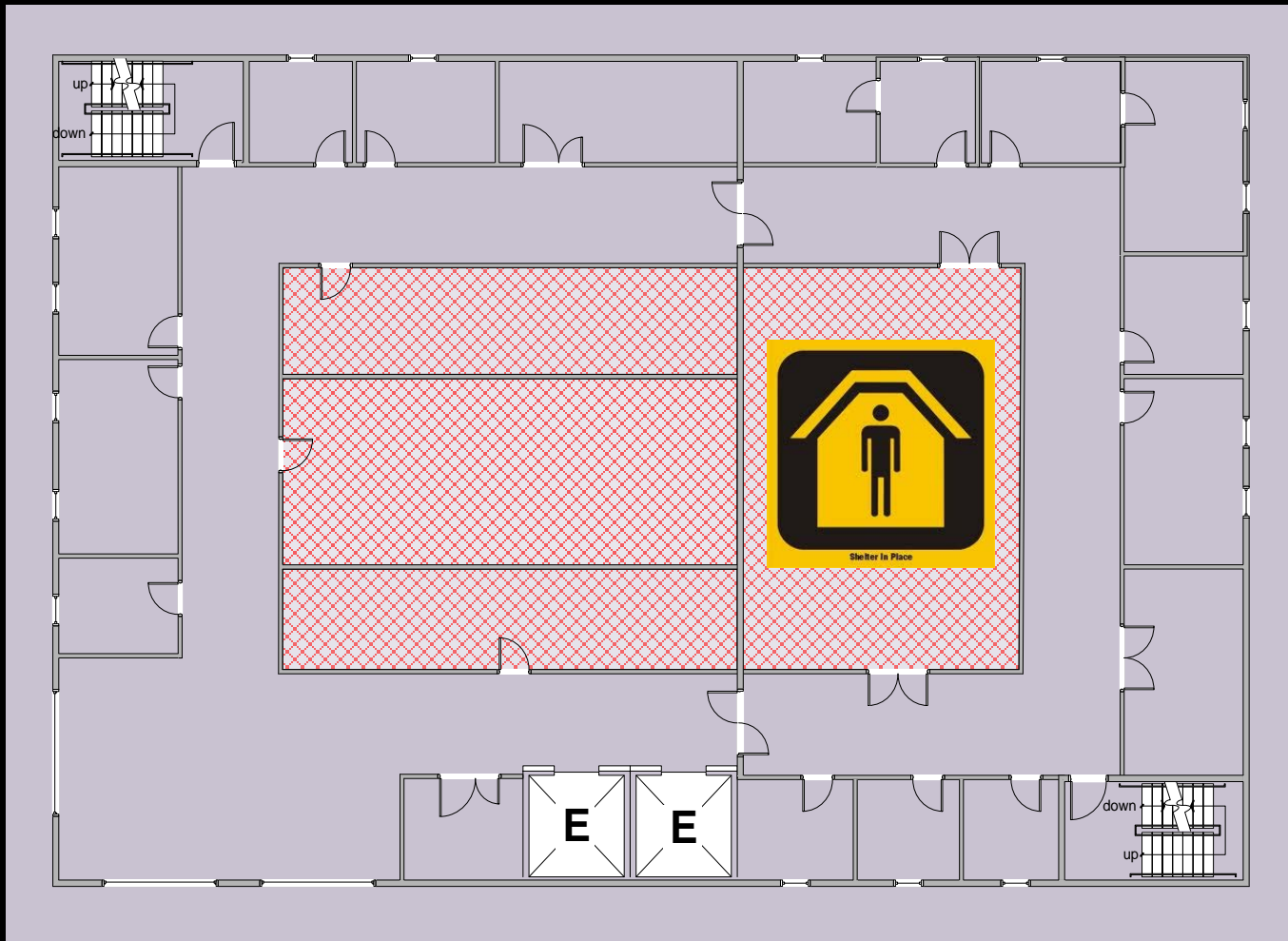
**Building is protected with automatic sprinklers**

# Relocation



**Building is protected with automatic sprinklers**

# Defend or Protect In Place



# Evacuate or Relocate?

**The fire code requires that most buildings have an emergency evacuation plan. The emergency plan must identify the occupant protection methods that are used in your building.**

**Follow the plan and the instructions provided at the time of the emergency**

# Your Responsibility

- ▣ Keep the exits clear and unobstructed
- ▣ Be mindful of improper storage (Excessive, Hazardous, etc.)
- ▣ Do not compromise fire protection and alarm systems.
- ▣ Ensure fire separation partitions are properly maintained (No Breeches, etc.)
- ▣ Promptly report problems with exits or systems to the person in charge. Why?

**LIFE SAFETY IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY!**



# HOW CAN WE HELP ONE ANOTHER?

When the DC Fire & EMS Department is called to an Embassy for an emergency:

- ✓ We are guided by instructions from the embassy security and will not enter until asked to do so.
- ✓ If the call is made from inside the embassy, please ensure that the information is relayed to the embassy's security staff.
- ✓ Ensure that there is an onsite interpreter to address any language barrier issues.
- ✓ Ensure that there is a listing of numbers for emergency contact persons available.

# Information

For more information on emergency preparedness, emergency evacuation planning, and the fire code please contact:



DC Fire & EMS Department  
Fire Prevention Division  
1100 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW Suite E700  
Washington, DC 20024

(Monday- Friday) 8:15 am to 4:45 pm  
(202) 727-1614  
[fems.dc.gov](http://fems.dc.gov)

# THANK YOU



## DON'T FORGET!

“LIFE SAFTY IS EVERYONES RESPONSIBILITY”